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MAHES RAJ PANT

KATHMANDU
1984

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Published by:-
Mahes Raj Pant
Vatu,Sabal Bahal
Ga 1-530
Kathmandu-3
Nepal.

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Price - Rs 20/-

Printed by OSSC Press
Teku, Kathmandu

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Dear Professor Kamal P. Malla,

Thank you very much for a copy of your review of Mary Shepherd Slusser's Nepal Mandala published in the latest issue of the CNAS Journal which you kindly sent me on the 5th of February, 1984.

I must say I read your review with absorbing interest and pondered over some points raised in it. I came to the conclusion that one specific point you raised in the review calls for immediate refutation.

As a matter of fact, this comment upon your review published in the CNAS Journal should have been published in the form of a rejoinder in that Journal itself. But I was unable to pursue such a course for two reasons. In the first place, I do not know the pressure of business of the Journal and I have the misgiving that my article will have to wait for years before it sees the light of the day; and secondly, I know the editor reserves the right to reject any article prejudicing the set policies of the journal. Needless to say, whether or not a particular thing is favourable, depends on the attitude of the person viewing it. Indeed, I am not sure if my rejoinder will be appreciated by you, who incidentally happen to be the chief editor of the said Journal. As I am keen on publishing it soon, I have decided to publish it in the form of a booklet.

Your review suffers from not one but many weak points which can be rebutted. I would, like to concentrete for the time being, on one point only. Time and mood permitting, I will deal with others as well.

Incidentally, you have in that review, came to the conclusion that the book entitled Śrī 5 Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa Śāhako Upadeśa (hereinafter referred to as PSU) which was jointly authored by my father Naya Raj Pant, Devi Prasad Bhandari, my Guru, my class-mate Gautamvajra Vajracharya and Dinesh Raj Pant, my brother,[1] is a minor work. At first let me quote here your own words:

> ...The bibliography is extensive, particularly in listing the publications of the Saṃśodhana Mandala. Here, for the first time, is a book in which a Western scholar gratefully acknowledges the contributions made by Nepalese scholars. In the past, books on Nepalese history and culture written by authorities on Nepal--Western as well as Nepalese--used to

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1. Letters relating to Prithvinarayan Shah, included in PSU, were edited by Dhanabajra Bajracharya, my Guru.

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be summaries of the writings of British-Indian civil/medical/military cadre. It is gratifying to see that this is no longer possible. The acknowledgements to Nepalese sources are ample, and in a few cases, fulsome. To give just one example, Slusser singles out Śrī Pāñca Prithvinarayaṇa Shāhāko Upadeśa (Patan: Jagadamba Press[2] 1968) edited by Naya Rāj Pant and others as "an outstanding contribution on the history of Nepal after A.D. 1769" (p. 78, footnote 168). It is an edition of a late manuscript of 10 pages in length. The edition is in five parts, running to a total of 1350 pages,[3] -- the magnum opus of the group, according to its principal editor (Preface, p.4). The first part, oddly enough, begins with an anaemic versified interpretation of Prithvinārāyan Shāh by Naya Rāj Pant, displaying the latter's competence in Sanskrit prosody. Then comes the prose version, not of the text, but of the poem. The actual text of upadeśa the book purports to edit is in an appendix between pp. 413-431![4] The edition includes a 109 - page errata and addenda.[5] A greater part of the 1350 pages is padded with extracts from the 1878 Bhāṣā Vaṁśāvalī. Compare this antediluvian "textual/critical edition" with Fr Ludwig Stiller's Prithvi Narayan Shaha in the Light of His Divya Upadesh[6] (Ranchi: 1968). A slim volume of

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2. PSU was published not by the Jagadamba Press, but by the Jagadamba Publications. Nor was it printed at the Jagadamba Press ,but at the Nepal Press . - MRP.

3. PSU altogether consists of 1351 + 138 + 11 + 8 = 1508 pages.- MRP.

4. The actual text of the Upadeśa is between pp. 314 and 331, not between pp. 413-431 , as you said. - MRP.

5. The errata and addenda occur between pp. 39 and 146 of the part which covers the Preface, the Table of Contents, Errata and Addenda of PSU. However, the pagination from 65 onwards is wrongly printed throughout the part so that it shows eight pages more than the actual page number. Moreover, there are errata and addenda between pp. Ka - Ṭa (A-K). Thus the actual total number of pages that contains errata and addenda is 111. - MRP.

6. The title of Stiller's book actually reads as Prithwinarayan Shah in the Light of Dibya Upadesh, not as you write, Prithvi Narayan Shah in the Light of His Divya Upadesh. - MRP.

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> bare 78 pages,[7] it contains not only an eminently readable English translation of the Upadeśa text, but also one of the best available interpretations of it, clearly and concisely bringing out the life and times of the great soldier-statesman. Slusser's adulation of Saṃśodhana Maṇḍala is understandable, but why she chose such as inept specimen of their scholarship to do so is incomprehensible.[8]

This extract from your review leads one to conclude that in your view the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala's PSU is not a work that merits commendation. First of all, I would like to thank you for going through this voluminous book and trying to evaluate it. I now take it as my duty to explain to you the retionale behind the publication of PSU and proceed from the same.

Though you have sung the glory of the intellectual traditions of the Newars,[9] rather than of all the Nepalese, our conception is that the intellectual traditions do not exist in Nepal to the extent comparable to those of many other nations. You, however, have asserted at one place that the poverty of intellect does exist in Nepal.[10] Our conception in this regard is based not on any preconceived ideas, but on the close examination of our history. Similarly, there are other areas where we have nothing to be proud of. Yet the fact remains that the rise of Prithvinarayan Shah gave impetus to a resurrection which was unique in the history of the Indian subcontinent as a whole. If any impediment existed to the path of conquest of Nepal by the British, it was the far-sighted policy of Prithvinarayan Shah. Even when the allurement of kingship

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7. Stiller's book does not have only 78 pages, as you said. The body of the text contains 74 pages plus eight pages in the beginning. Thus in all it contains 82 pages. - MRP.

8. Kamal P. Malla, "The Limits of Surface Archaeology," Contributions to Nepalese Studies, vol.XI, no.1 (Kirtipur : Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, 1983), p.132.

9. Kamal P. Malla, Classical Newari Literature : A Sketch (Kathmandu : Educational Enterprise Pvt. Ltd., 1982, hereinafter referred to as CNL), pp.18-27 i.e. the Chapter entitled "The Intellectual Traditions of Newars."

10. Kamal P. Malla, "The Intellectual in Nepalese Society," Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana and Kamal P. Malla, ed. Nepal in Perspective (Kathmandu : Centre for Economic Development and Administration, 1973, hereinafter referred to as NP), p.263.

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was offered to the Gurkha courtiers if they changed their loyalty and went over to their side, they spurned the offer-a fact bewildering even to the British themselves. Prithvinarayan Shah, who was successful in winning over the wealthy courtiers of the neighbouring Malla and Sen kings by offering them the guarantee that their properties would not be affected, had to say: "Do not let anybody, a soldier or a courtier, amass wealth,and maintain his standard only according to his status because a man with wealth may handle a sword neither to kill nor to get killed, and the enemy will prevail over."[11] He did not let his courtiers amass riches with the view that as he had won over the wealthy courtiers of his enemies to his side assuring them the security of their properties, similarly if his courtiers were rich, they might fall a prey to temptation of his enemies with a natural desire for retaining their wealth and earning even more. Brought up under these Spartan lives, the Gurkhas cultivated the habit of frugality with limited wants, and were able to play with the sword to kill and get killed,and consolidate the principalities of the Himalayas into a nation.

In my opinion, the voluminous book, i.e. PSU, was brought out to elucidate on Prithvinarayan Shah's policy in an authentic light.

In this context, it will not be irrelevant to quote the statement of the principal author, though it may be somewhat lengthy:

३०, ३२ वर्ष जति अगाडिको कुरो हो। एक दिन काठमाडौं हनुमान्‌ढोका देगुतलेको अगाडिको प्रताप-मल्लको स्तम्भको अभिलेखलाई म एकलै सार्न लागिरहेको थिएँ। त्यस बेला श्रीबखतमानसिंह बस्न्यात मकहाँ जाई मेरो कुरामा सोधपूछ गर्न लाग्नुभयो। मैले उहाँलाई उस बेलाभन्दा १२ वर्ष जति अगाडि स्रेस्ता पाठशालामा पढ्दा सहपाठेको रूपमा चिनेको थिएँ। त्यसपछि उहाँको र मेरो सङ्गत भएको थिएन। शिलापत्रहरू सार्दा नानाथरीका मान्छेहरू आई यताउताका कुरा गरी काममा अलमल पारिदिने गरेकाले त्यस बेला सकभर बस्न्यातजीबाट परै बस्न मैले उद्योग गरें। तर बस्न्यातजीले यस्ता शिलापत्रहरू तपाईंलाई चाहिने भए म धेरै ठाउँमा देखाइदिन्छु, भसँग पुराना कागतपत्रहरू पनि छन् भनी भन्नुभएको र मैले प्रतापमल्लको सो अभिलेख सार्न लागेको २, ३ घण्टाको समयसम्म पनि डेग नचली मकहाँ नै उहाँ बसीरहनुभएकोले उहाँको साथ लागी नारायणहिटीको नारायण मन्दिरमा रहेको धोकलसिंह बस्न्यातको अभिलेख हेर्न म गएँ। सो अभिलेख पढेर मैले सारें। 'यसको अर्थ मलाई लेखिदिनु-होस्' भनी बस्न्यातजीले भन्नुभएकोले धोकलसिंहको सो अभिलेखको अर्थ नेपालीमा लेखी मैले उहाँलाई दिएँ। यसपछि बिस्तारै उहाँबाट मैले केही कागतपत्र पाएँ। तिनको उल्लेख ती ती कागजपत्र प्रकाश गराउँदा ती ती ठाउँमा परेका छन्। उहाँलाई पनि मैले थाहा पाएसम्मका उहाँका वंशसम्बन्धी वर्णन लेखी दिएको छु। यसै प्रसङ्गमा नेपाली काँचो कागतमा लेखिएको पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको उपदेश मैले बखतमानसिंहबाट पाएँ। त्यसलाई सारी मैले लिएँ। मैले सारी लिएको प्रति मसँग छँदैछ।

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11. Naya Raj Pant et al., Śrī 5 Pṛithvīnārāyaṇa Śāhako Upadeśa (Counsel of His Majesty King Prithvinarayan Shah) (Patan : Jagadamba Publications: V.S.2025 (1969), hereinafter referred to as PSU), p.325 :

क्या जुनी सिपाई भया क्या भँभारादार भया इनलाई दवलथ् कामाउन नदिनु. आदमी हेरी हुमंत मात्रै राखीदिनु. क्यान भनौला दवलथ् भयाकाले तरवारमा पसि मर्न मार्न सकैनन् र हरिपको चपक् हुन्छ.

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पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको उपदेशलाई म बारंबार पढन लागें । भाषाको विभिन्नताले गर्दा अर्थमैको ठीक अर्थ बताई लागेन ।

सूर्यविक्रम ज्ञवालीको पृथ्वीनारायण शाह नामक ग्रन्थमा ख. बाबुरामबाट पाएको भनी .सो उपदेशको चर्चा गरेको छ । सो उपदेशको अविकल भागको त्यहाँ व्याख्या पनि गरिएको छ । त्यसबाट पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको सो उपदेशको अर्थ गर्न सम्भव भएन ।

विस्तारैसंग सो उपदेशको गाँठो फुकाउन भनी सकेसम्म उद्योग गर्न म लागें । वि. सं. १९९६ मा पृथ्वी-नारायणको सो उपदेशको विषयलाई मुख्य गरी सिई एउटा काव्य नेपालीमा लेखी प्रकाश गर्न म लागें । तर बे. ना. प्र. समितिको अन्धनले यो प्रकाश गराउन मैले सकिनँ । को ३ पक्षको अति उदार दृष्टि भएकोले श्री प्रा. तोत्रराजसंग मिली नेपालको संक्षिप्त इतिहास प्रकाश गराउन वि. सं. २००४ मा म सफल भएँ । त्यहाँ पृथ्वीनारायणको उपदेशको बुझिएको अविकल अर्थ प्रकाश गरिएको छ ।

प्रजातन्त्र आयो । पृथ्वीनारायणको उपदेशको चर्चा यताउता सुनिन-आयो । ऐतिहासिकशिरोमणि बाबुराम आचार्य र योगी नरहरिनाथले मिली पृथ्वीनारायणको सो उपदेशको आफ्नो बुद्धिअनुसारको व्याख्या वि. सं. २०१० मा प्रकाश गराउनुभयो । म पनि त्यस बेला सो उपदेशलाई संस्कृतमा पद्यानुवाद गरी संस्कृत-सन्देशमा प्रकाश गराउन लाग्नेको थिएँ । अघरा छन्दका जम्मा १३४ श्लोकमा मैले सो उपदेशको सम्पूर्ण भावलाई अनुवाद गरी वि. सं. २०१०-११ को संस्कृत-सन्देशमा त्यसलाई प्रकाशित गराएको छु । त्यहाँ मैले आफ्नो बुद्धिअनुसारको व्याख्या गरेको छु । त्यति भएर पनि पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको हृदयलाई मैले ठीकसँग बुझ्न सकेजस्तो बताई लागेन ।

चताके भनी कहलाएका मानिसहरूमा भन्ने एक चोक र गर्ने अर्को चोक प्रायः देखिन्छ । पृथ्वीनारायणको उपदेशसँग उनले गरेका कामलाई तुलना गर्न उनले लेखेका चिट्ठीपत्रहरूलाई पाएसम्म परिश्रम गरी खोजी सकेसम्म बढेर मैले पढेको छु । यसो गर्दा पृथ्वीनारायणको उपदेश उनको हृदयको सच्चा प्रतिबिम्ब हो भन्ने कुरा मैले संघे। नेपाललाई स्वतन्त्र राष्ट्रको रूपमा खडा गराई उत्तर दक्षिण पूर्वको रक्षाबाट बचाइराख्न विचार गरिएको युक्ति यो उपदेशको सार हो भन्ने कुरा मैले सम्झेको छु ।[12]

पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको यस उपदेशलाई पढे सुनेका नेपालीले मनन गर्नु बढिया छ

पृथ्वीनारायण शाहले २० वर्ष सिहिनेत गरी मकवानपुरलाई आफ्नो राज्यमा मिलाए । नेपालको उन्नति हुनु भारतमा बसेका साम्राज्यवादीहरूलाई मन पर्ने कुरो थिएन र त्यहाँका साम्राज्यवादी मुसलमान र अंग्रेजहरूले पृथ्वीनारायणलाई निमोठ्न खोजे । पृथ्वीनारायणले सबै तिनीलाई बचाउनुपऱ्यो । यति गरेपछि उनले नेपाल-खाल्डोलाई जिते । त्यसपछि पूर्वका वुद सेन राज्यलाई जिती पृथ्वीनारायणले पूर्वमा सुक्किमसँग नेपालको सीमाना जोडे । यति गरी चक्रिमतिरका राज्यमा आँखा लगाई पृथ्वीनारायण मुवाकोट भएका बिए अकस्मात् उनलाई त्यहाँ ठूलो रोग लाग्यो । त्यस बेला उनको उमेर ५२ वर्षको मात्र थियो । त्यस उमेरमा महत्वाकांक्षा भन्ने कुरा चिताउन विरोध संभव भएकोले आफूपछिको बन्दोबस्त त्यस उमेरमा मानिसले गरिसकेको प्रायः हुँदैन । यस कारण पृथ्वी-नारायणको मनमा रहेका अनेक योजनाहरू त्यसै अलपत्र पर्न संभव भयो । योग बाधुको योग्य छोरा हुनु भन्ने कुराको नियम छैन । यस कारण अब नेपाल राज्यको अवस्था के हुन्छ भन्ने कुराको चिन्ता अंग्रेज जस्तो शत्रु भएको नेपालको शासकले विचार गर्नु अपरिहार्य थियो । यस अवस्थामा पृथ्वीनारायणले आफ्नो अनुभव र योजना सुनाई आफ्ना भारदारहरूलाई उपदेश दिई तिनबाट आफ्ना सन्तानलाई उपदेश दिलाउन भनी जुन कुरा बोले सोही कुरा यो उपदेश हो ।

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12. Ibid. Preface... Part, pp. 4-6.

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दुर्भाग्यले गर्दा हाम्रो देशमा उचित शिक्षाको प्रबन्ध थिएन तथा छैन । यस कारण एउटाले अनुभव गरेको कुरा अर्कोले जान्न पाउँदैन र हामीहरूको ज्ञान विशृङ्खल भई हाम्रो विद्यापरम्परा चल्न सकेको छैन । यस अवस्थामा यो उपदेशले नेपाली राजनीतिको भूमिका बसाउनुसिवाय केही गर्न सकेन । तैपनि कथा सुनीकन विद्वान् बन्ने चलन भएको हाम्रो देशमा गोरखाली राजवंशका भारदारहरूलाई एक पुस्तासम्म यस उपदेशले प्रेरणा दिंदै रह्यो र उनीहरूले शत्रुसँग भिडिंदै देश विजय गर्दै गए । पृथ्वीनारायणको साक्षात् संसर्ग नपाएका भीमसेन थापाको हातमा अधिकार आएपछि यो उपदेश काम नलाग्ने भयो र नेपालले हराएका अंग्रेजले नेपाल जितियो ।

यति कुराको सार यस उपदेशभित्र गोरखाली विजययात्राको र नेपालको एकीकरणको रहस्य लुकेको छ भन्ने कुरा देखिन आउँछ । यस कारण हामीले अब कि त दुइ शय वर्षभन्दा बढ्ता पुरानो अवस्थामा गई साना साना राज्यमा बाँडिई बस्नुपर्छ अथवा विदेशी साम्राज्यमा मिली नेपाल राष्ट्रको अस्तित्वलाई मिटाइदिनुपर्छ अथवा नेपालको एकीकरण कुन सिद्धान्तमा भएको थियो र हाम्रो कस्तो अवस्था थियो तथा छ भन्ने कुरामा विचार गर्नुपर्छ । पहिलेका दुइटा कुरा गर्न मन नपराउने नेपालीहरूले यस राजनीतिको दर्शनको विषयमा मनन गर्नु आवश्यक छ । नत्र हामीले मन नपराएका कुराले हामीलाई मन पराउनेछन् ।[13]

पृथ्वीनारायण शाहले लेखेका र उनलाई अरूले लेखेका जम्मै पत्रहरू, उनका विषयमा तात्कालिक र अलिपछिका मानिसहरूले लेखेका जम्मै लेखलाई सङ्ग्रह गरी प्रकाश गर्ने लोभमा पर्दा यस पुस्तकको आकार बढ्दै गयो । यति नगरी पृथ्वीनारायणको विचार बुझ्न सकिंदैन र उनको उपदेशको भाव राम्ररी बुझिन्न भन्ने मेरो भाव छ । त्यसैअनुसार मैले उनको उपदेशको पद्यात्मक व्याख्या गरेको हुँ ।[14]

हाम्रा छैनन् विश्वविख्यात विद्वान्,
हाम्रा छैनन् दूरदर्शी कलावान् ।
हाम्रो आफ्नो छैन केही पदार्थ,
जेले पार्रौं विश्वमा उच्च माथ ॥१॥

हाम्रो यस्तो दीनता क्यै हटाई
हामीलाई हौसला क्यै दिलाई ।
पार्ने हाम्रो चित्तमा सद्विवेक
जन्मेका छन् राजनीतिज्ञ एक ॥२॥

भित्री आस्था ली तिनैका पदार्थ
गुन्दै जाने जत्ति गर्दै यथार्थ ।
धेरै धेरै वर्ष मैले बिताएँ
जस्ता हुन् यी पद्यलाई उभ्याएँ ॥३॥

जल्ले हेर्छन् भित्र राम्रो गढेर
जल्ले गुन्छन् पक्षलाई त्यजेर ।
त्यस्तालाई ग्रन्थ यो हात जोर्छ
तो जाँचून् यो ठीक बेठीक जे छ ॥४॥[15]

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13. Ibid. pp. 8-9.

14. Ibid. pp. 12-13.

15. Ibid. p.15.

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"This happened more than thirty years before. One day I was copying alone the inscription on the column set up by Pratapa Malla opposite to Degutale at Hanuman Dhoka, when Mr. Bakhatman Singh Basnyat came to me and made an enquiry about the thing I was doing. My acquaintance with the gentleman went back to about twelve years earlier when we were fellow students at the Shresta Pathashala. After that we had parted company. While copying inscriptions, the riff-raff of the town would gather and talk about irrelevant matters; hence I made an attempt to keep him at arm's length. But Mr. Basnyat told me that if I needed such inscriptions, he knew places where he could show me others. Moreover, he had old documents in his possession, as he told me. He stayed with me for two or three hours without moving. After copying the inscription I went with him to see Dhaukal Singh Basnyat's inscription of the Narayan temple at Narayanhity. I went through the inscription and copied it. He wanted to have its Nepali rendering and I gave him what he wanted. I got by degrees some documents from him. The allusion to these things is made at relevant places where the documents are published. I have written to him the facts known to me about his family history. I got from him in course of our contact the manuscript of the Upadeśa of Prithvinarayan Shah written on unprocessed Nepali paper. I copied the MS. and I still own the copy.

I went repeatedly through the Upadeśa of Prithvinarayan Shah. However, I could not comprehend all owing to the language differences.

Reference to the Upadeśa of Prithvinarayan Shah was made by Surya Bikram Gewali in his Pṛthvīnārāyan Śāha wherein he claims to have received it from Kharidar Baburam Acharya. A small portion of the Upadeśa was explained there. But it was impossible to understand all the implications of the Upadeśa on the basis of that book alone.

Gradually I got myself engaged in the task of unravelling the Gordian knot of the Upadeśa. In 1939 I was at the point of bringing out a poetical work mainly dealing with the Upadeśa as my major theme, but the restrictions imposed by the Nepālī-bhāṣā-prakāśinī Samiti prevented me from publishing it. It was because His Highness Maharajah Padma Sham Sher Jang Bahadur Rana was somewhat liberal in his outlook so that in 1947 I was able to bring out a short history of Nepal in collaboration with Professor Totra Raj Pandey. In the book the meaning of the Upadeśa was explained as far as it could be understood.

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With the advent of democracy people here and there began to make reference to the Upadeśa. In 1954 Historian Laureate Baburam Acharya and Yogi Naraharinath jointly published the explanation of the Upadeśa as understood by them. At that time I too was preoccupied with my Sanskrit version of the Upadeśa in versified form. During the years 1954-55, I got the version, consisting of 134 verses of the Sragdharā metre, published in the Saṃskṛta-sandeśa. It contains an elucidation of the Upadeśa as I understood it. Even then I did not think that I had been able to grasp the mind of Prithvinarayan Shah thoroughly.

Those who are known as clever are usually fond of saying one thing and doing quite another. In order to compare Prithvinarayan Shah's exploits with his Upadeśa, I have exerted my utmost to find as many letters written by him as available, and perused them.-In the process, I came to the conclusion that his Upadeśa was a true reflection of his own mind. I am of the definite opinion that Prithvinarayan Shah's strategy to establish Nepal as an independent nation free from pressure of both the north and the south is the essence of his Upadeśa.

The Upadeśa of Prithvinarayan Shah is worth reading by the educated Nepalese.

Prithvinarayan Shah, after twenty years' strenuous efforts, succeeded in amalgamating the kingdom of Makwanpur with his own. The rise of Nepal could not have been viewed with favour by the imperialists based in India. That was why the Indian Muslims and the Britishers wanted to strangle Prithvinarayan Shah so that the latter had had to fight against and oust them. Thereafter, Prithvinarayan Shah conquered the Kathmandu valley. After that he conquered two Sen kingdoms in the east. Thus the eastern boundary of his kingdom extended to Sikkim. He then focused his eyes on the west and finally went to Nuwakot where he fell terminally ill.

At the time he was just fifty-two. A person of that age usually would find it inconceivable that his death is imminent so that he fails to decide on measures that must be taken after his death, as desired by him. So it was possible that the various projects which Prithvinarayan Shah had in mind would remain still-born. There is no hard and fast rule that a worthy father begets a worthy son. It was therefore imperative that the ruler of Nepal, who had a powerful enemy to the south like the British, should be seriously concerned about the affairs of Nepal. Under these circumstances, Prithvinarayan

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Shah narrated his experience and plans to his courtiers and handed down this Upadeśa before them so that his courtiers might pass on the same to his successors.

Unfortunately, our country did not have arrangements for proper education nor do we have them now. So the experience of one man cannot be transmitted for the benefit of others, and our knowledge remains unrelated. Our scholastic tradition thereby has failed to make progress. Against this background, this Upadeśa could not break any new ground except to lay the foundation of the Nepalese politics. However, in our country where a person becomes erudite by listening to stories, this Upadeśa continued inspiring the Gurkha courtiers for one generation, which went on fighting against enemies and conquering their territories. This Upadeśa ceased to be followed when power passed into the hands of Bhimsen Thapa, who had had no contact with Prithvinarayan Shah in person. Consequently, the British, once a victim, became the victor.

The substance of what is said above is that the secret behind the military campaign of the Gurkhas and the unification of Nepal is hidden in the very Upadeśa. This is why either we have to go back to the times more than two hundred years before and be prepared to be divided again into small principalities, or be integrated into a foreign empire and thereby lose the identity of Nepal as a nation, or ponder over the principle on the basis of which the unification of Nepal was achieved, as well as over the past and present positio of ours. The Nepalese who look with disfavour the first two options are required to meditate on the contents of this political philosophy. Otherwise, we will be in the grip of things we abhor.

This book became more and more voluminous because we could not resist the temptation of collecting here all the letters to and from Prithvinarayan Shah and the contemporary and somewhat later writings on or about him. I think we cannot understand him and his Upadeśa properly without doing so. Accordingly, I have presented a versified explanation of his Upadeśa.

I

We do not have internationally reputed scholars,
Nor do we have the far-sighted artists.
We do not have anything as our own
That ennobles us before the world.

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II

To remove such wretchedness of ours to some extent,
To enthuse us with courage a little,
And to implant good idea in us,
A person versed in statecraft is born amongst us.

III

With the inner faith in the meanings of his words,
I spent many a year,
Pondering as much as I could understand them,
And I composed the verses as they are.

IV

They who study it deeply,
They who contemplate without bias,
To them I beseech,
To examine its worth."

I have quoted the lengthy extract above from my father's writing to make it clear to you that PSU was written to explain as much as possible the philosophy of Prithvinarayan Shah.

Your comment that "The first part, oddly enough, begins with an anaemic versified interpretation of Prithvinārāyan Shāh by Naya Rāj Pant, displaying the latter's competence in Sanskrit prosody" provoked me into writing something in this regard.

I hope you are not unaware of the fact that there has been a tradition to popularize, present or interpret any philosophy in various styles. If it were not the case, works other than the original ones relating to a given philosophy would not have been written. So with a view to explaining the philosophy of Prithvinarayan Shah to the general public, my father, as far as I know, presented the Upadeśa in versified form, inasmuch as the verses are easier to memorize and at the same time are more pleasing to the ear. Indeed, I see no rationale behind your comment that "The first part,oddly enough, begins with a . . . versified interpretation of Prithvinarayan Shah."

Apparently, your reference to the versified interpretation as the display of Naya Raj Pant's "competence in Sanskrit prosody" is couched in derogatory tone. In fact, these verses were not composed by my father to show off his competence in Sanskrit prosody. Of the three hundred and seventy-one verses,

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most of them are in Śārdūlavikrīḍita which is popular with the general Nepali public. He has used other metres wherever he could not accommodate the contents in Śārdūlavikrīḍita.

In your view the versified interpretation is anaemic. But you have not explained how it can be considered anaemic. In any case, the verses are based on facts, not on imagination. If the verses based on facts can be called anaemic, I have no comment.

In this connection, I would like to recall an incident which occurred 24 years ago. The syllabus of the Intermediate of Arts on the Nepali textbooks included the second part of the Nepālī Padyasaṃgraha (Nepali Poetry Selections) published by the Nepālī-bhāṣā-prakaśinī Samiti. In 1959, the late Harihar Shastri brought out a key to the Selections, in which he made the baseless allegation in respect of my father's poem "Bahādura Śāhako Ākhirī Taraṅga" (The Last Thought of Bahadur Shah) - which was incorporated in that part- as a work of a literary hack. Why he made the allegation is understandable, and I am going to narrate that. He had sought help from my father in his writings. He got some, but not to the extent he had expected. This made him unhappy. Then he, with a view to causing the student community to show disrespect towards my father, disseminated the propaganda that the poem was the work of a literary hack, without providing any evidence to substantiate it.[16] At least I do not know you expected such help from my father. I would therefore be highly obliged to you if you could throw light on your contention - with supporting proof - that the versified interpretation of the Upadeśa is anaemic.

"Then comes the prose version, not of the text, but of the poem", as you write in your review.

Pursuing a policy of dynamic opportunism, some intellectuals, who are successful in the popular eyes, speak out as the circumstances demand, sometimes contradicting themselves in the process. Their writings reflect their multi-faceted and conflicting personality. Such intellectuals use their writings as a jumping board for instantaneous eminence and thus betray insincerity. We find that sometimes they are haunted by their own previous

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16. Naya Raj Pant, Vidyā-raksā, no.2 [Kathmandu: V.S.2016 (1959)].

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writings. On the other hand, the writings of those truly dedicated to the acquisition of knowledge are the products of strenuous efforts, and such scholars have firm belief in what they write. That is why some scholars have explained their works with their own commentaries lest others should distort them. What my father versified was rendered into prose so that there could be no room for such distortion. That is my presumption.

Thus, you have falsely accused my father of having rendered into prose not the text of the Upadeśa itself, but his own verses. I fail to understand your reference to the prose version of the text of the Upadeśa. You should be definitely aware that the Upadeśa was originally in the form of prose, not of verses. If you mean to say that the original Nepali in which Prithvinarayan Shah had given his Upadeśa should have been rendered into its modern form, I would like to remind you that this is what my father had done in PSU. Do not forget that the presentation of the original text of a given section is followed by its rendering into modern Nepali and its versified explanation, in that order.

Then you write: "The actual text of upadeśa the book purports to edit is in appendix between pp. 413-431 !" That you end your sentence with an exclamation mark indicates that you appear to be baffled by the editing of the text. I presume PSU was not written just for the purpose of editing the text. As far as I know, PSU was written to popularize the ideas underlying the Upadeśa and to juxtapose Prithvinarayan Shah's action with what he said. The book therefore incorporates all the materials relating to him.

Then, in course of your attempts to pick holes in PSU, you pointed out the errata and addenda running to a total of 109 pages. It is true that errata and addenda are signs of shortcomings, not of merit, of any publication. But in a country like ours, where a tradition to bring out scholarly publications has not yet been set up, printing mistakes have been more a rule than an exception. The body of a book has to contain all that is needed to be said, as well as all that is needed to substantiate it. It has also to undergo modifications in the light of later research. Certainly this indicates not the merit but the defect of a book. All the same, this should be recognized as the result of perseverance on the part of the author. This kind of modification in the body of a book is feasible if it is typeset for offset printing. Only people endowed with adequate resources tend to remove defects in this way. But persons who have no access to resources, yet

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wish to bring out their works in as correct and complete a form as possible have perhaps no alternative but to insert errata and addenda in the book.

In this context it would not be irrelevant if I were to quote the words of the principal author of PSU with reference to this weakness of his work:

हामी ग्रन्थ छपाउँदै जान्छौं । आफ्ना ग्रन्थमा अनि अनि अशुद्धि पनि देख्छौं । तो अशुद्धिको संशोधन गर्न शुद्धिपत्र दिइएको छ । छापाखानासम्बन्धी अशुद्धिको पनि शुद्धिपत्र दिन यहाँ प्रयत्न गरिएको छ । यस ग्रन्थमा देखिन आएका दोषलाई सप्रमाण देखाई प्रकाश गरी वा अप्रकाशित रूपमा हामीकहाँ सूचना पठाइदिने कृपा सज्जनहरूले गरिदिनुहुनेमा आगामी आवृत्तिमा सधन्यवाद उहाँहरूको नामसाथ हामी आफ्नो दोष सच्याउनेछौं ।

यस ग्रन्थलाई प्रकाश गर्दा हामीले आफ्नो भएसम्मको योग्यताबाट काम लिएका छौं तथा पाइएसम्मका सामग्री छोडेका छैनौं । यसै कारणले एकै संख्याको पनि क, ख आदि गर्नुपरेको छ ।[17]

"In the process of printing, we discover errors here and there in our writings. To correct these, errata have been given. Attempts have also been made to remove printing errors. If any person is kind enough to pinpoint with evidence the defects of this book in published form or to bring them to our notice in unpublished form, we would be grateful to him and rectify them with acknowledgement in subsequent supplements of the book.

In writing this work, we have utilized the best of our intellectual ability and included here all such materials as are available to us. That is why some of the documents have to be numbered as A and B and so on and so forth."

You also claim that "A greater part of the 1350 pages is padded with extracts from the 1878 Bhāṣā Vaṁśāvalī." It is true that 383 pages i.e. pp.544-926 from the Vaṁśāvalī have been accommodated in the 1351-page PSU. But the book is not padded with extracts from Vaṁśāvalī, as you claim.

The Vaṁśāvalī-s, though of later origin, are based on the old tradition, and have preserved, more or less, the old pieces of evidence and legends.

Furthermore, in our country, history and Vaṁśāvalī are regarded as synonymous. As we do not yet have the organized tradition of preserving contemporary documents which will prove indispensable later, many an episode of history may be skipped over or become unintelligible if we are to ignore what is

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17. PSU, Preface... Part, p.14.

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recorded in the Vaṃśāvalī-s. Many an event that could not be previously corroborated on the basis of the then documents is preserved in the Vaṃśāvalī-s. The recent findings of these documents refute the misconception that the Vaṃśāvalī is a structure built on sand. That is why the life of Prithvinarayan Shah would appear largely obscure and even lost if we ignore what is recorded in the Vaṃśāvalī-s. Therefore, as I see, PSU contains the portion of the Vaṃśāvalī which covers the time from Dravya Shah, the founder of the Gorkha dynasty, to Prithvinarayan Shah.

At this juncture, I would like to drive home one point. More than a century has passed since the publication of the Vaṃśāvalī in its various versions. However, only PSU has ventured to compare the accounts recorded in the Vaṃśāvalī with contemporary pieces of evidence. This subject has received some attention in Bhāṣā-vaṃśāvalī published by the Nepal National Library and edited by Naya Nath Paudel and Devi Prasad Lamsal. No other editors seem to have given any attention to this subject. This Vaṃśāvalī portion of PSU is presumably a signpost for editing the Vaṃśāvalī-s.

The scope of PSU is not limited, as you claim, to the text of the Upadeśa, its versified interpretation, the prose version of the verses, the Vaṃśāvalī portion, and the errata and addenda. All the words contained in the text of the Upadeśa are alphabetically arranged and explained authentically in the glossary section (pp. 332-387). Prithvinarayan Shah's horoscope, the poems on him composed by his court poets, and the writings of his contemporaries and of the people who flourished a little later on or about him are presented there, together with texts and their translations from pp. 388 to 543. Then comes the portion of the Vaṃśāvalī you disparagingly speak about. On almost three hundred pages i.e. from 927 to 1206, we read contemporary letters relating to Prithvinarayan Shah. In the chapter just referred to, all such letters relating to the Gorkha administration from the years 1740 to 1775 as are available are published together with their historical commentaries. Then begins the historical commentary on the text of the Upadeśa. That chapter is, in fact, the touchstone of the shastric erudition of the authors. Unfortunately that portion could not be published in toto. The authors of PSU wanted to present an image of Prithvinarayan Shah as seen through the eyes of his contemporary foreigners.[18]

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18. PSU, p.819.

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Accordingly, they had started collecting the writings of his contemporary foreigners and translating them into Nepali,but they could not get them published at all.Similarly, my father wrote a detailed Introduction to the Upadeśa. However, he was able to publish the tinier portion thereof in the form of Preface. He had intended to publish the Introduction in its entirety after other chapters were completed.[19] Thus, in my opinion, the greatest flaw of PSU is its incompleteness, not its voluminous nature, as you claim.

Your failure to refer to the glossary, letters and other materials presented in PSU has completely taken me by surprise. To some extent, this inspired me to suspect that you wished to belittle the contribution of PSU in the historiography of Nepal.

What has been said of the Mahābhārata-yad ihāsti tad anyatra yan ne'hāsti na tat kwacit[20] (what is here is elsewhere, what is not here is nowhere)- can probably be applied to PSU, because its authors wished to prepare a sourcebook on Prithvinarayan Shah in order to present his Upadeśa vis-a-vis his actions. Owing to some reasons, the book could not be completed to the extent desired. But in any case, it is not an "inept specimen" of the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala's scholarship, as you assert.

You have compared PSU with Ludwig Stiller's Prithwinarayan Shah in the Light of Dibya Upadesh, and considered Stiller's work far better than the former. I have neither any intention nor time now to enter into controversy as to the comparative merits or demerits of the two works. But I cannot help pointing out in this context a minor lapse on your part. You have exaggerated the quality of the translation of the Upadeśa as done by Stiller. Actually the translation is not true to the original. I was aware of this flaw as early as 1968 when the book came out. An essay on the errors in his translation of the Upadeśa may run into a volume, if it is to be brought out after all the necessary corrections.

You seem to be fond of passing judgement upon the merit or otherwise of the books written after years of strenuous research only after reading them superfivially. However, you seem to lack the competence to arrive

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19. PSU, Preface... Part, p.13.

20. Vishnu S. Sukthankar, ed. The Mahābhārata for the First Time Critically Edited, vol.I, p.244 (1.56.33). (Poona : Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1933, hereinafter referred to as CEM 1).

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at scholarly judgement in such matters. I quote an excerpt from your authorized version of the Upadeśa, which happens to be the translation of Stiller, to prove your incompetence in this field.

In this context, I remember a Sanskrit maxim- Sthālīpulākanyāya (The maxim of the cooking pot and the boiled rice). This maxim, which is about the cooking pot and the boiled rice, originated from the practice of deciding, on the basis of an examination of one grain, as to whether the rice is cooked or not. When one grain is found to be well-cooked, the same is inferred with regard to the rest. So the maxim is used when the condition of the whole class is inferred from that of a part. Let us apply the principle of Sthālīpulākanyāya to the translation done by Stiller.

Prithvinarayan Shah gives also a few words of advice to his courtiers in his Upadeśa concerning what kind of policy Nepal should adopt towards his two mighty neighbours, and on the fortification of the Kathmandu valley. Let us make this section of the Upadeśa the basis for our Sthālīpulākanyāya.

Prithvinarayan Shah Says:

उप्रान्त ।। यो राजे दुई ढुंगाको तरुल जस्तो रहेछ. चीनबादसाहसित ठुलो घाहा राख्नु. दखिनको समुन्द्रका बादसाहसित घाहा ता राख्नु. तर त्यो महाचतुर छ. हिन्दुस्थाना दबाईराखेछ. सरजिमीमा परिरहेछ. हिन्दुस्थाना जाम्यो भन्या कठिन् पर्ला भनि किल्ला खोजन आउन्याछ. सन्धोसर्पन् हेरि गडि तुल्याई राख्नु र रस्ता रस्तामा भाजा हालि राख्नु र यक दिन त्यो बल आउन्याछ. जाइ कटक् गर्नु. झिकी कटक् गर्नु र चुरेघाटिमा धुपै काटिन्याछ. पाच सात पुस्तालाई बजना पनि मिल्नेछ. श्रीगङ्गाजिको साथ पनि लाग्नेछ. लडाईमा पुकेन भन्या लोलोपोतो अनेक कलें छल गरिकन पनि यो नेपालको तखत किल्ला हो. यो किल्ला पायो भन्या चारै बादसाहलाई बहाला लाउनेछ. इस्वरले रचना गऱ्याको किल्ला रहेछ. स्वधनुपर्ने रहेनछ. ...[21]

Stiller translates the above passage as follows:

Upranta

This country is like a gourd between two rocks. Maintain a treaty of friendship with the emperor of China. Keep also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of the southern sea (the Company). He has taken the plains. He will realize that if Hindustan unites, it will be difficult, and so he will come seeking places for forts. Prepare forts, without burdening the people. Set traps in the trails. One day that force will come. Do not go down to the plains to fight. Withdraw to the hills to fight. Chure Pass will be much used. Store arms and

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21. PSU, p. 322.

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ammunition there for five to seven generations. The Ganga is also a line of defence. If this does not suffice in war, regardless of trickery or schemes, the strength of Nepal lies in her forts. If he takes these, the four emperors will come. God has given us the places for these forts. There is no need to ask where.[22]

Prithvinarayan Shah's statement "Cīnabādasāhasīta ṭhulo ghāhā rāṣnu" has been translated by Stiller as "Maintain a treaty of friendship with the emperor of China." The correct translation of these words of Prithvinarayan Shah is as follows: "Maintain a treaty of great friendship with the emperor of China." It is clear that Stiller has omitted the word ṭhulo (great) in his translation.

Stiller translates "daṣinako samundrakā bādasāhasita ghāhā tā rāṣnu. tara tyo mahācatura cha. hindusthānā dabāīrāṣecha. sarajimīmā parirahecha" as follows: "Keep also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of the southern sea (the Company). He has taken the plains." But the correct and complete translation of these sentences is this: "Maintain also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of the southern sea. But he is very cunning. He has brought India under his subjugation. He is fighting with his neighbours." It is quite clear that Stiller has failed to take cognizance of two sentences - tara tyo mahācatura cha. sarajimīmā parirahecha - in his translation of the Upadeśa.

Another sentence "sandhīsarpan heri gaḍi tulyāī rāṣnu" is translated by Stiller as "Prepare forts without burdening the people." Stiller and you- who admire him as the ideal interpreter of the Upadeśa-should best know how far it is correct to translate the terms sandhīsarpan heri in this way. The work sandhīsarpan is used even now as a synonym for places not easily accessible to all. Stiller could not comprehend even such a simple word and translated it in a fantastic way. The correct translation of the sentence quoted above is as such: "Prepare forts after taking the strategic points into consideration."

Stiller's version of "cureghāṭimā ṣupai kaṭinyācha. pāca sāta pustālāī ṣajanā pani milṇecha" is: "Chure Pass will be much used. Store arms and

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22. L. F. Stiller, Prithwinarayan Shah in the Light of Dibya Upadesh (Ranchi : 1968), p.42.

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ammunition there for five to seven generations."

Prithvinarayan Shah knew that the Gurkhas would be no match for the British in the plains as his soldiers were accustomed to fighting in the hills against the enemy advancing north from the southern plains. For that reason he had planned to deploy troops on the Chure pass to stop the enemy from penetrating into the hilly regions. His strategy was to lure the British to the Siwalik foothills of Nepal, using the Chure pass as the line of defence and offence for the annihilation of the enemy. As his troops were able to defeat the British at the battle of Sindhuli and capture flintlocks from the fleeing British soldiers,[23] he, having been tempted by the British arms and ammunition, had planned to engage on the Chure pass the British troops who had come in great numbers with the aim of defeating the Nepalese. His ploy was to slaughter them there and then and capture their arms and ammunition. This strategy, if worked, would not only save the independence of Nepal, but also would reap arms and ammunition for generations. In his statement - "**pāca sāta pustālāī ṣajanā pani milnecha**" - Prithvinarayan Shah has explicitly used the future tense "**milnecha**", not the imperative expression, as Stiller's translation would seem to suggest. It is clear that Stiller's translation: "Store arms and ammunition for five to seven generations there" does not stand on solid ground. The true translation is as follows: "In the Chure pass a lot of (British soldiers) will be slaughtered. For five to seven generations arms and ammunition also will be procured."

Prithvinarayan Shah's assertion that "**śrigaṃgājiko sādha pani lāgnaicha**" is interpreted by Stiller as "Ganga is also a line of defence." While translating this he failed to take into account the extent of the territorial expansion aspired by the Gurkhas. Prithvinarayan Shah's plan was to annihilate the British at the Chure pass and pursue them through the Nepalese plains and oust them from this side of the Gangetic plains, after capturing some portions of Bihar.

In 1792, during the regency of his youngest son - Bahadur Shah - the western boundary of Nepal extended as far as the Alaknanda, the major tributary of the Ganges. A dedicatory inscription inscribed on a gilt copper-plate at the Bhairavi temple in Nuwakot glorifies this extent of Nepal's boundary in the

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23. PSU, p. 330:
तिन बार पस्टन् लिएर सिधुलि गढिमा हांडोसाहेब चढ्यो र बा बाहो पनि काढि पचर्कासा ल्याति ल्याया र.

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following Sanskrit verse:

गङ्गा सीमा समासीत्तदवसरसमायातचीनाधिपोपि
नेपालध्वंसनोद्यन्मतिरतिबहलान्ध्वंसितान्स्वान्विलोक्य ।।
अङ्के तं स्थापयित्वा शिशुमवनिपतिं श्रीबहादूरसाहे
भैरव्युद्दामधामप्रकटितसुमतौ शासतिप्रद्रुतोस्मिन् ।।६।।[24]

"At that time the boundary was the Ganges. The emperor of China who came to Nepal with a view to destroying Nepal had to flee when he saw the carnage of his own people. At that time, having placed the infant king in his lap, Bahadur Shah, who derives his wisdom from the unrestrained power of Bhairavi, was ruling."

It was not unnatural for Prithvinarayan Shah to aspire for extending his kingdom to the Ganges - the holiest of the Hindu rivers - as he identified his country with the real land of the Hindus,[25] and was proud to preserve the Hindu ideals and aspirations. As such,the correct translation of the above sentence should be: "The boundary would extend as far as the Ganges."

The sentence "yo nepālako taṣata killā ho" has been translated by Stiller in these words: "The strength of Nepal lies in her forts." He translates taṣata - a word of Persian origin - as strength. Actually taṣata means nothing but a throne and the whole sentence can only be translated as follows: "This throne of Nepal is the fort." In other words, Prithvinarayan Shah has likened the mountains surrounding the valley of Kathmandu to forts. This becomes clear also from the remark: "isvarale racanā garyāko killā rahecha. svadhanuparne rahenacha" (I see, this is a fort made by God himself. There is no need to repair it). Stiller, on the other hand, failed to understand the implication of the word taṣata and has came to a strange conclusion.

He has committed another blunder by translating "yo killā pāyo bhanyā cārai bādasāhalāī varhālā lāünaicha"as: "If he takes these, the four emperors will come." Stiller, needless to say, interprets varhālā lāünaicha as "will come", but the phrase means "will pursue." Accordingly, the above - quoted

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24. Dhanabajra Bajracharya and Tek Bahadur Shrestha, Nuvākoṭako Aitihāsika Rūparekhā (An Outline of the History of Nuwakot) [Kirtipur : Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, V.S. 2032 (1975)], Source Section, p.38.

25. PSU, p.325:

यो अस्तित् हिन्दुस्थाना हो.

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sentence should be translated into English this way: "If he gets these, he will push back all the four emperors." In other words, if these impregnable forts are occupied, even the four emperors can be defeated. As such, Stiller's translation of "varhālā lāũnaicha" as "will come" is totally erroneous.

Stiller's translation of "isvarale racanā garyāko killā rahecha. svadhanuparne rahenacha" is even more ridiculous. Stiller offers the translation of these sentences: "God has given us the places for these forts. There is no need to ask where." He has misunderstood the meaning of the world svadhanu and confused it with a modern Nepali word sodhanu, meaning "to ask". From the Sanskrit root śudh, meaning "to become pure", come words like śuddha, śuddhi, śodha and śodhana. Perhaps Stiller could not comprehend the etymological derivation of the word svadhanu and consequently failed to understand the meaning of svadhanuparne rahenacha which means: "There is no need of purifying or repairing it." To repeat once more, what these words mean is that God himself has designed fortifications for the defence of the Kathmandu valley and, therefore, no special measures by way of repair works need be taken to defend it. The correct translation of these two sentences is as follows: "I see, this is the fort made by God himself. There is no need to repair it."

Now, I hope, you will be convinced of your superb translator's skill of understanding of the Upadeśa in its entirety.

Those who authored PSU have nowhere claimed that their work is the textual/critical edition of the Upadeśa. But you have branded PSU as such. As you have put the words textual/critical edition within the quotation marks, I wonder if you wanted to show the authors wrongly claiming their work to be the textual/critical edition of the Upadeśa text.

In the West, the principle of constituting the texts of classical works developed in such a way as to lead to emergence of a separate discipline. Some Indologists have come to the conclusion that they cannot solve all the problems facing them in editing Indian texts on the basis of the science of textual criticism as developed for Western works. They have therefore formulated the guiding formulae regarding the method of critical edition of Indian texts with certain adaptations in the science of textual criticism.[26] I do not know

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26. e.g. Vishnu S. Sukthankar, "Prolongemena," CEM I.
S.M. Katre, Introduction to Indian Textual Criticism, 2nd ed. (Poona : Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, 1954).

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if anybody has followed the principle of textual criticism in its entirety in Nepal, though we have completed 46 years since we started editing ancient texts. At this point I better recall the case of the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata on which the internationally reputed Sanskritists spent 47 years. Even this Critical Edition could not satisfy some scholars, who opined that it was not critical enough, though the editors claimed as such.[27] We have heard more than once scholars ridiculing the Critical Edition of the Mahābhārata, and claiming that it was the Poona recension of the Mahābhārata as we already possess of Northern, Southern and other recensions of the same text. Furthermore, scholars have been saying that "Up to now no adequate and universally adopted theory of Indian textual criticism has been developed."[28] Against this background, I fail to understand why you have belittled the method of editing of the Upadeśa followed by the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala.

If you are under any delusion as to the utility of PSU it will certainly be removed once you have read all that I have written so far in this open letter to you. But my impression is that what you wrote on PSU is inspired more by your personal as well as sectarian interests than by delusion. That is why I am going to write something about this.

Being convinced that the education system of ours produces more braggarts than erudite scholars, my father gathered some of his close disciples as far back as 1940 and started teaching them, evolving his own courses of study in contrast to the degree-oriented system. Top priority was given under this system to the advanced study of the Sanskrit language, and no wonder that the products of this school had excellent command over Sanskrit. This enabled them to have independent access to many a discipline from the whole range of Sanskrit literature. By 1936, my father had already started researching on the history of Nepal, as well. So he took his students to the study of the history of Nepal. Then he gradually gave them instruction in paleography, concentrating on various scripts which we encounter in old documents from Nepal. As a result, they were able to decipher any inscription found in Nepal. Some of them were his former students as the Government School where my father taught Jyautiṣa. My father taught chronology to those students already

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27. Oskar v. Hinueber, "Remarks on the Problems of Textual Criticism in Editing Anonymous Sanskrit Literature," Proceedings of the First Symposium of Nepali and German Sanskritists 1978 (Dang and Kathmandu : Institute of Sanskrit Studies and Nepal Research Centre, 1980), p.33.

28. Ibid, p. 29.

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acquainted with Jyautiṣa. Accordingly, they were able to verify the dates found in old documents. As some of those students belong to the Newar community, historical documents in Newari were also gradually translated. My father intended to conduct research on the history of Nepal through those students who were deeply convinced that the degree-oriented system of education was not so helpful in producing erudite scholars, and they received their education without aspiring for degrees. Subsequently, he engaged them from 1952 onwards in the task of bringing out the correct versions of the different aspects of Nepalese history in the form of the Itihāsa-saṃśodhana pamphlets. In those pamphlets the students pointed out with documentary evidence the errors committed by the so-called scholars in dealing with the history of Nepal. That work of the group attracted a lot of popular attention at that time. Some of the Itihāsa-saṃśodhana pamphlets contained harsh words to shock those who were incompetent to write the history of Nepal, but who were out to pursue a get-rich-more-quick policy. The task of the group helped to highlight various aspects of Nepalese history and gave a fresh impetus to the reconstruction of a correct and complete history of Nepal. The greatest contribution of this group was that it inspired the natives with the idea that given proper education, we can carry on research, and we ourselves are competent enough to reconstruct our past, and gone are the days of such history-books which were mere summaries of foreign writings that appeared long ago. Because the work of this group prejudiced the prestige of the so-called scholars, they became the implacable foes of this group. But they were entrenched in high positions, so that they exerted their utmost to thwart its advancement. Consequently, most of the harrassed students abandoned their work. None the less, some dedicated students carried on their research.

We, the rump of the same group, started visiting this and that place from 1958 onwards, and deciphered, copied and took the rubbings of the inscriptions. This we did every Saturday. Consequently, we came in possession of readings and rubbings of a lot of hitherto unpublished inscriptions. Though some of the results of this research work were reflected in different issues of the Itihāsa-saṃśodhana, we decided to publish regularly the texts of the inscriptions, and started in 1961 a quarterly journal entitled Abhilekha-saṃgraha. At the same time, we formally constituted ourselves into a group called Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala. We spent three years publishing only texts of the previously unpublished inscriptions in the Abhilekha-saṃgraha, and correcting errors of Nepalese history-books, and throwing lights on its new aspects in

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the Itihāsa-saṁśodhana. With a view to presenting our work in a better way we have been issuing since 1964 a quarterly journal Pūrṇimā dealing mainly with different aspects of Nepalese history.

In the mean time you acquired English education and became a scholar, and brought out your writings as well. In 1973, Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) published Nepal in Perspective edited by you jointly with Pashupati Shumshere J. B. Rana. This publication no doubt was a result of your strenuous work. However, I detected many errors on historical references in the compilation, which claims to describe how "Nepal's own experts and authorities think of their land, their people, history, culture, their language and literature."[29] The issue in question also carried two articles under your own byline and the Introduction to the compilation jointly written by the two editors. I could not help resolving to refute with documentary evidence the errors found therein in order to debunk about the level of knowledge of so-called experts and authorities who are out to introduce Nepal to the outside world. Accordingly, in 1974 I published a paper to refute contentions made in the compilation. I singled out only the errors in the Introduction jointly written by you two editors.[30] The readers of the Pūrṇimā fully understood how you Nepal experts hastily had tried to project a picture of Nepal before the outside world on the basis of the superficial knowledge at your disposal. I realize that you would not appreciate this gesture on my part.

Only a tiny section of the public has been demanding for some years that the nationally recognized Vikrama Samvat be discarded in favour of the Nepal Samvat. As a student of Nepalese history, I deemed it my bounden duty to say something on this issue, for when this demand is fulfilled, and people are thereby encouraged to raise more and more of such demands, the unity of our country achieved through strenuous efforts of our forefathers would be undermined. In this context, a correspondent of the Manas, a Nepali-language weekly, put some questions to me on the issue. My answers to them were published in the weekly sometime in November 1981, that is, when the Nepal

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29. NP, Preface, p.IX.

30. Mahes Raj Pant, "Nepal in Perspectivemā Dekhiekā Itihāsasambandhī Aśuddhi "(Errors Relating to Historical References as Detected in Nepal in Perspective) , Pūrṇimā, vol. VIII, no.4 [Kathmandu : Saṁśodhana-maṇḍala, V.S. 2031 (1975)], pp. 250-265.

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Samvat had recently entered upon a new year. My statement was criticized by the partisans of the Nepal Samvat. But I went on offering counter-replies to the points raised by the apologists of the Nepal Samvat. In this way the controversy gathered momentum.

A compilation of my writings that appeared in newspapers about the irrelevance of giving national recognition to the Nepal Samvat was published by the Saṁśodhana-maṇḍala under the title of the Nepālasaṁvatko Rāṣṭriya Mānyatāko Anaucitya (Irrelevance of National Recognition to the Nepal Samvat) on the new year day of the Vikrama Samvat in April, 1982.

Your article "The Relevance of Nepāla Saṃvat" appeared in October, 1982 on the occasion of the new year day of the Nepal Samvat. In the article you tried to answer some of the points raised by me, without naming me personally. You have even taken recourse to untruth in this venture of yours. You wrote in the article "The official boycott of Nepāla Saṃvat, and the adoption of the Vikrama era,began in A.D. 1903, during the fateful reign of Candra Śumśer Rāṇā (1901-1929)." [31] To paraphrase you, the Vikrama Samvat has come into use in Nepal only eighty-one years ago.

My letter to you is already getting long. Therefore I am not going to repeat all what I said before. In my book,referred to above,I already made all the points about the irrelevance of national recognition to the Nepal Samvat. The practice of the Nepal Samvat was confined to the states ruled by the Newar kings. While the process of the unification of Nepal was going on, its use went on declining. I presented all those facts with documentary evidence in the same book of mine. Even in the pre-unification Nepal, the usage of the Vikrama Samvat was not circumscribed, but extended over many principalities for hundreds of years. The Vikrama Samvat was not a new thing even in Newar kingdoms. I cited pertinent documentary proofs in the same book.

Your contention "in Nepal, the Rāṇās adopted Virama Era merely to flatter their family pride and prove their "Rajput" or Solar origins" [32] is totally invalid. History is a witness to the use of the Vikrama Samvat hundreds of years prior to the advent of the Rana administration in Nepal. Your this self-deluding approach will convince none but yourself.

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31. Kamal P. Malla, "The Relevance of Nepāla Saṃvat," Nepāla Samvat 1103 Nhū Dāyā Bhiṃtunā (Greetings on the New Year Nepal Samvat 1103) (Kathmandu : Ganga Club, 1982), p.4.

32. Ibid.

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If you insist that the Vikrama Samvat was adopted by Chandra Sham Sher in 1903, then which of his ancestors inspired Prithvī Malla, a fourteenth century Khasa king of the Karnali region, to have the Vikrama Samvat written in his inscription? Which ancestor of Chandra Sham Sher was responsible for the inscriptions dated in the Vikrama Samvat set up during the reigns of Sthitirāja Malla and his son Dharma Malla who ruled over the Kathmandu valley and the environs during the last quarter of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries? Do you mean to say that any of the forebears of Chandra Sham Sher had exerted pressure on the various rulers of the so-called twenty-two and twenty-four principalities to date their respective charters in the Vikrama Samvat? Was the dating in the Vikrama Samvat of the treaty of friendship between Prithvinarayan Shah and Jayaprakāśa Malla, the last ruler of Kathmandu, the result of a conspiracy on the part of Ram Krishna Kunwar, the grandfather of Chandra's grandfather, when the emergence of the Rana regime was still almost 90 years away? Rana Bahadur Shah nationalized Birta lands in 1805 which corresponds to the Vikrama Samvat 1862. This step of Rana Bahadur is popularly known as the Basatthi-baran that means the confiscation of '62. Did Bal Narsing Kunwar, the grandfather of Chandra Sham Sher, leave any tale-tell evidence of his conspiratorial nature to commemorate that event? Have you come accidentally or otherwise in possession of such documents to support your contention? If not, how can you prove that the use of the Vikrama Samvat began during the rule of Chandra Sham Sher?

The Vikrama Samvat was used both in the pre-and-post-unification Nepal, yet you write that the Vikrama Samvat was adopted by Chandra Sham Sher in 1903. Why? Let us leave aside all those ancient things and start with the Shah rulers beginning with Prithvinarayan. Prithwi Bir Bikram was reigning Nepal when Chandra Sham Sher took over the office of Prime Ministership. Of the thousands of the Lalmohar-s issued during the regins of Prithvinarayan to Prithwi Bir Bikram, how many of these documents have you come across, which are dated in the eras other than the Vikrama Samvat?

There is no trace of the Nepal Samvat in the documents of the Khasa kings of the Western Nepal. Similarly, there does not exist any documentary reference to the Nepal Samvat in all the twenty-two or twenty-four principalities. It dates the documents of the Newar kings who ruled from the Kathmandu valley as well as of those personally executed by the Newars who migrated from the Valley and settled elsewhere.

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People like you have insinuated that the Vikrama Samvat is of Indian origin and girded up their loins to replace it with the Nepal Samvat. The enlightened section of the Nepalese population is not unfamiliar with the strategy of people like you which is just a precursor to an agitation demanding the replacement of the Nepali language written in Devanagari script- which too is Indic- by the Newari language with its own characters as the national language on the ground that Nepali is the regional language of an Indian state, that it is very close to Indian languages like Hindi and Bengali, that the national language of India is written in the same Devanagari script in which Nepali is used, that Newari is nowhere spoken outside the country and that it bears the name of the Nepālabhāṣā (The Language of Nepal) and, finally, that it has its own script.

At the time you wrote that article, I was in Germany and so could not refute your contention then and there. Now your article has become too stale to require point by point refutation. What I wrote in these few lines are just in passing.

You may retort that the matter relates to the humorous writings that appear in the Gaijatra issues of newspapers. Last year, in the Gaijatra issue of a Newari weekly Inapa, which is published by your own brother, I was accused of receiving Rs.4,000 from the Department of Information, though the names of both that Department and mine were jumbled.[33] I came to know of this insinuation only after my return from Germany.

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33. Inapa, vol I, no.33 (August 24, 1983):

नेपाल सम्वतयात सरकारी मान्यता
यें ।
श्री ५ या सरकारं जनताया सः कदरयाना नेपाल सम्वतयात राष्ट्रिय मान्यता म्यूगु दु ।
मंका खलकं सरकारया पलाःया लसकुस यासें ध्व स्वयां न्ह्यः हे नेपाल सम्वतयात सरकारं छाय् मान्यता
मम्यूगु खः धकाः न्यंगु न्ह्यसःया लिसलय् छम्ह अधिकारीं थथे धया दिल– सम्वतया विषयं खं वय् वं ध्व सम्वत राष्ट्रिय
खः वा मखु धकाः इतिहासकारपि भाजु टपरी व भाजु बोटायाके न्यना स्वः बसे आपालं विरोध जुगुलिं थौं तक
लिकुना च्वंगु खः । हानं उगु हे इलय थःत इतिहासकार धकाः धकु त्वःतीह्य भाजु मदेश दाश पन्तं नेपाल सम्वतया
विरोधय् भाजु दे हाः हाला च्वंगुलिं सरकारयात छुं याये मछ्यूंगु खः ।

थुपाय् लाक भाजु मदेश दाश पन्त छगू वक्तव्यय् नेपाल सम्वतया विरोध थः यस्सें यानागु मखसें नक्साः
लिकसं च्वंगु पुखूया लुंब्यांचात त्वारा त्वारा हाला ध्वारा ध्वारा हाःगुलिं फताह खं च्वयागु खः धकाः आत्म
आलोचना याः गु दु ।

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I was opposed to giving national recognition to the Nepal Samvat not because I was prodded by any quarter to do so nor did I expect to derive any financial

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नापं भाजु पन्तं धया दिल- छुयाय् ? जातं ब्यूगु बानि दक्षिणा फय्गु धाल धायवं जनैया इजारं चोमासां सहयाय् मा: । नेपाल सम्वतया विरुद्धय् च्वता च्वया: जित घण्टाघर लिकसं च्वंगु रचना विभागं प्यद्व: दां ब्यूगु खं सत्य ख: ।

"Government Recognition to the Nepal Samvat"
Kathmandu.

His Majesty's Government has extended, in appreciation of the popular voice, national recognition to the Nepal Samvat. While welcoming the step taken by the Government, the Manka Khala asked why the Government had not extended the recognition earlier. In reply, an official stated that when the question relating to the era was raised, historicuses M/S Tapari and Bohata (Priests who receive ritual charity on plates made of green leaves - MRP) were asked whether or nor this era was a national one. They vehemently vehemently opposed any recognition to the Nepal Samvat, and the question was left pending so long. Furthermore, at the same time, Mr. Madesh Das (an innuendo to Mahes Raj, literally meaning Slave of India - MRP) Pant, who brags about his being a historian, has been shouting hoarse against the Nepal Samvat thereby rendering it difficult for the Government to initiate something in this respect.

At the same time Mr. Madesh Das Pant had gone through self-criticism by saying that he had opposed the Nepal Samvat not on his own, but that he had scribbled lies in response to the promptings of the croakings of the golden frogs of the pond near Naxal.

Mr. Pant added : I cannot help it. This is the habit sanctioned by the caste to which I belong. One should not care even if one's holy thread has to be converted into the suspender of one's trousers, as soon as one thinks of accepting the ritual offer of fees. It is true that the Department of Racanā (Composition, an allusion to Sūcanā, meaning Information - MRP) situated near the Clock Tower, rewarded me with a sum of rupees four thousand for having campaigned against the Nepal Samvat through my articles."

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benefit. Nor did anybody give me a penny for undertaking the task. I wrote because I could not resist the urge of my conscience. People born and brought up in an environment where nothing but money can influence any action could not expect to visualize a situation in which people write because they cannot help doing so. Such were the very people who tried their best to libel me through such baseless insinuations. They lacked counter-evidence to refute my articles which were backed up by evidence and logic, and that is why, they had to play such a crafty game. Afraid that they might be sued for libel, if they indulged in such type of writings at other time, the communalists took advantage of the festival, to cast slander on me, since all the Gaijatra publications are beyond the reach of law. Had those protagonists of national recognition of the Nepal Samvat been sincere, they would have put all their cards on the table instead of playing the underhand game of character assassination.

As I pointed out earlier, intellectuals pursuing a policy of dynamic opportunism use their writing as a jumping board for their instantaneous eminence, and such writings reflect their multi-faceted and conflicting personality. I cite now your writings as an example of this opportunism. I appeal to you not to get offended.

When you were not in any influential position, but were just preparing for it, you wrote the following in Nepal in Perspective which you edited with an influential gentleman, and was published by CEDA:

In the Kathmandu Valley, Nepali had also been in frequent use in the later Malla period, mainly as a vernacular.[34]

Later, for a few years you were successful in holding an influential position. God alone knows what caused your subsequent fall from that office. Then came out your Classical Newari Literature: A Sketch, wherein you wrote the following:

> The Nepal Valley was a melting pot, ethnically as well as linguistically, during the medieval period. In the past, some scholars have drawn hasty conclusions about the linguistic situation on the basis of isolated instances. Ācārya (reported in Clark, 1957) made a fanciful claim when he said

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34. NP, p.271.

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> When Pratāp Malla constructed the Rāni Pokharī tīrtha, he set up an inscription in stone so that the news of the tirtha should spread all over the country, to the east and the west; and because Newari, the language of the capital, was not current in the east and the west, he made use of khas bhāsā in this inscription, thereby acknowledging it to be the national language.

Clark (1957) - relying perhaps on his informants- claimed that a large portion of the people of the valley spoke khas kurā in the 17th century and that "there were many Nepali-speakers permanently resident there at this time, and that the two languages (Nepali and Newari-KPM) were in use concurrently, both in the court and in the city". (Clark, 1957 : 185). We do not know whether Clark saw Pratāp Malla's Hanuman Dhokā inscription where even French words were used as early as A.D. 1654 or whether the late Bāburām Ācārya had an opportunity to go through the Malla dramas in Maithili or the plays in Bengali written in the Malla courts. The existence of these documents no more proves that there were many French, Maithili or Bengali speakers "permanently resident" in the Nepal valley. There certainly were some hill brāhmins particularly in Kānth or outskirts of the Valley and a few in the city who could compose inscriptions in Nepali just as there were scribes who could inscribe in French and Latin to set up multilingual inscriptions or compose multilingual plays in the court.

What is often misunderstood about the linguistic situation in the late medieval Nepal is the fact that the royalty adopted a very liberal attitude to language just as they did to religion and culture...35

No sooner does a man with common sense finish reading the two extracts just quoted above than he begins to suspect that the authors of the two quotations must be two different persons holding diametrically opposite opinions on the language situation of the Kathmandu valley during the later Malla period, though actually both the writings are in the byline of the same person.

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35. CNL, pp. 31-32.

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In 1973 you had written that "In the Kathmandu Valley, Nepali had also been in frequent use in the later Malla period, mainly as a vernacular." But in 1982 you wrote that "There certainly were some hill brāhmins particularly in Kānth or outskirts of the Valley and a few in the city who could compose inscriptions in Nepali just as there were scribes who could inscribe in French and Latin to set up multilingual inscriptions or compose multilingual plays in the court." Thus, after the lapse of eight years you made a complete volte-face regarding the language situation of the Kathmandu valley during the later Malla period.

You further contradicted your own statement about the language situation when you wrote that Nepali had no influence during the later Malla period. you argue to the effect that inasmuch as Pratāpa Malla had used even French words in one of his inscriptions, it is not surprising that he should have also set up an inscription in the Nepali language. In order to support your contention, you claim that there were a few persons who could compose inscriptions in Nepali, just as there were scribes who could inscribe in French and Latin to set up multilingual inscriptions or compose dramas in Maithili or Bengali.

You had written in a publication issued by an institution patronized by the Government that Nepali was a vernacular in the Valley during the Malla period. But once you were relieved of the influential position, you equated Nepali with such alien languages as French and Latin.

Really I fail to understand how a language which you considered eight years ago to be a vernacular of the Kathmandu valley during the later Malla times turned out one fine morning as outlandish as French and Latin prevalent across the seven seas? If this is not a somersault, what else is it?

Products of the school founded by my father have been writing since 1954 on the position of the Nepali language in the Malla kingdoms with the capitals in the Kathmandu valley. Bal Chandra Sharma (now deceased) claimed in his Nepālako Aitihāsika Rūparekhā (An Outline of the History of Nepal) that Nepali was not used as a vernacular prior to Prithvinarayan Shah's conquest, and that its use went on expanding in the Kathmandu valley only after it. Laxman Satyal and the late Akrur Kuinkel refuted this assertion with documentary evidence in No. 4 of their Itihāsa-saṃśodhana series in 1954. Similarly Bhairab Bahadur Pradhan (now dead) claimed in his Newari-language Madhyakālīna Nepāla (Medieval Nepal) that during the Malla period there

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were only three types of Brahmins-the Devabhajus, the Bhattas and the Maithilas - while the others were all Newari-speaking people in Nepal. This too was refuted with documentary proofs by the late Ramji Tewari, Devi Prasad Bhandari and Shankar Man Rajbanshi in 1955 in No. 2 of their Itihāsa-Saṃśodhana series. Later in 1962, in our Itihāsa-saṃśodhanko Pramāṇa-prameya, we - Dhanabajra Bajracharya, Ramji Tewari, Devi Prasad Bhandari, Bhola Nath Paudel, Shankar Man Rajbanshi, Gautamvajra Vajracharya, Mahes Raj Pant and Naya Nath Paudel - shed more light on the situation of the Nepali language and the Nepali-speaking population in the Newar kingdoms, with many more supporting documents. Since the past four years I have been writing a paper on the same subject, taking into account all the new materials discovered later. This paper has already taken the shape of a monograph, but my diversified assignments in the meanwhile and my preoccupation with other matters of intellectual interest compelled me to let the paper remain incomplete. But I hope I will be able to complete this task in one or two years. So I would not elaborate on this matter for the time being. It is your Janus-faced policy which impelled me to write a few lines by way of a retort.

The activities of the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala adversely affected the interest of those who had their own axes to grind and whose profession was to publicize what is not true. Similarly, I am aware that our activities have definitely landed you in a somewhat awkward position. That is why these people have left no stone unturned to belittle the contribution of the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala since its birth. It is not contrary to human nature to fail to appreciate others' admiration of the contribution made by the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala. That is why it appeared to me that you took exception to Mary Slusser's admiration for its contribution. It seems that you want to illustrate a Sanskrit saying Chinne mūle nai'va śākhā na patram (when the root is cut off, there would be no branches or leaves), and shout from the house-top that PSU is a minor work, though it is the most voluminous of the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala's contributions, and was prepared after years of study and research on the part of its founder.

By qualifying the Upadeśa of Prithvinarayan Shah as a late manuscript, you have paid a dubious compliment to it. In the first place, the date of the manuscript of the Upadeśa which we possess has not yet been established. If it is satisfactorily established that the MS. postdates the text, what is the objection if it is found to be old? Otherwise, what is your motive in

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qualifying the Upadeśa as a late manuscript? May I expect a clarification on your part in this regard?

Your review of Slusser's Nepal Mandala implies that you gave minimal importance to her book - a fact that cannot be slurred over. You have turned a blind eye to the greatest flaw of the book, but this did not astonish me, and strengthened my conviction about you. In this respect I will put all my cards on the table.

The erroneous idea of equating the Kathmandu valley with Nepal was first debunked by Totra Raj Pandey and my father in their book entitled Nepālako Saṃkṣipta Itihāsa (A Short History of Nepal) which was published in 1947. This book brought out sufficient evidence to prove that in ancient days Nepal comprised considerable territory extending far beyond the Kathmandu valley and its environs. Later, my father wrote an excellent paper on the topic, in the third part of Nepālī Gadya-saṃgraha (Nepali Prose Selections) under the title of "Nepāla Śabdako Artha" (The Meaning of the Word Nepāla), which was published in 1954. In 1962 we, the members of the Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala, accumulated more evidence in support of this fact in our work entitled Itihāsa- saṃśodhanako Pramāṇa-prameya. In 1964 Gautamvajra Vajracharya, on the basis of a post-Licchavi document, confirmed this in his paper entitled "Nevarī Bhāṣāko Tāmāṅa Bhāṣā tathā Limbū Bhāṣāsāgako Sādṛśya" (The Similarity of the Newari Language with the Tamang and Limbu Languages) which was published in Pūrṇimā No. 2. Jagadish C. Regmi brought to light evidence in this regard in his Licchavi Saṃskṛti (Licchavi Culture) published in 1969. In 1973 Dhanabajra Bajracharya's findings, on the basis of his extensive study of Licchavi inscriptions, lent further weight to this already established fact in his Licchavikālakā Abhilekha (Documents of the Licchavi period). Nuvākoṭako Aitihāsika Rūparekhā (An Outline of the History of Nuwakot) authored by Dhanabajra Bajracharya and Tek Bahadur Shrestha and published in 1976, and The Two Earliest Copper-plate Inscriptions from Nepal, written by myself in collaboration with Aishvarya Dhar Sharma and published in 1977, supplemented newer materials in support of the fact that Nepal in ancient times was extensive in size. Lately Jnan Mani Nepal has collected still more evidence in his Nepāla-nirukta (The Etymology of Nepāla) which will appear soon.

Let me at this stage make one thing clear. We have not undertaken this task with the idea of enhancing the glory of Nepal only on the basis of pseudo-evidence. Our conclusions are based on an in-depth study of facts reflected

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in historical documents. Therefore those, who claim, basing themselves on pseudo-evidence, that the Kathmandu valley is synonymous with Nepal, and that Newari is the Nepālabhāṣā (The Language of Nepal), felt aggrieved and showed growing hostility towards the Samśodhana-maṇḍala.

Therefore, those quarters which have engaged in propaganda about the Kathmandu valley being synonymous with Nepal have naturally liked the following assertion of Slusser in her Nepal Mandala: "Thus, to view the "Nepāla" mentioned in early sources as a large, permanent state comparable in any way with the present nation should very likely be attributed to national enthusiasm rather than to adherence to fact."[36] Understandably you kept mum on this particular assertion of Slusser, which actually is the theme around which her otherwise unprejudiced Nepal Mandala seems to revolve, but severely criticized other points contained in it, however minor they are. I know you certainly would not write that in olden says Nepal was not confined to the Kathmandu valley and its surrounding areas, but you could have at least commented in passing on the views of others on the same issue. What made you fail to do so is best known to you.

You pinpoint a large number of errors in the transliteration of Sanskrit, Nepali and Newari words, and in the translation of the same, that had crept in Slusser's Nepal Mandala. But you are no less culpable in this respect, as your writings profusely illustrate. The word Varman which ends with n becomes Varmā in its nominative singular. But in your writings the same word as interchangeable with Varma. In most cases, the n-ending Varman transforms into the a-stem Varmaṇa in your scholarly writings! Similarly you write Vṛjji[37] instead of Vṛji, and even baptize the well-known

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36. Mary Shepherd Slusser, Nepal Mandala : A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1982), vol.I, p.7.

37. Kamal P. Malla, "Linguistic Archaeology of the Nepal Valley, A Preliminary Report," Kailash, vol. VIII (Kathmandu : Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1981), p.6:

    The Licchavi inscriptions were official and religious documents issued by the ruling elites --the Licchavi kings, the Thakuri Varmaṇas and Ābhira Guptas as their vassals.

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Karaṇa-text Grahalāghava with an uncommon orthography as Grihalāghava.[38]

Ibid, p. 7:

C. Except for five or six non-Sanskrit personal names, all the personal names traced in the epigraphy are Indic and Sanskrit. Some typical surnames are: -- gupta, -- pāla, -- jīva, -- sena, -- dutta, -- mitra, -- varma, -- varmā, -- vardhana, -- varmaṇa, and -- gomi.

Ibid :

...The people supplying the place - names, unlike the ones supplying the personal names, must have been living in the valley ...

b. in large numbers, at least in greater numbers than the Licchavis, the Ābhira Guptas and the Thakuri Varmaṇas;...

Ibid, p. 18:

Already by the end of the first millennium A.D., the ancient clans of the pastoral Nepalās (herdsmen), the Kirātas, the Vṛjjis, the Śākyas, the Kolis, the Mallas, the ruling families of the Licchavis, the Ābhira Guptas, and the Thakuri Varmaṇas. all were lost among the aboriginals of the valley in the making of the Newars.

Ibid, p. 6:

Apart from these three, there are epigraphic evidences of the other immigrant clans of Indian origins such as the Vṛjjis, the Mallas, the Śākyas, the Kolīs.

38. CNL, pp.46-47:

Jyotiṣa...

5. Grihalāghava NS 876 (AD 1756)

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This is not all. Daṇḍin's Kāvyādarśa, a well-known text on rhetoric, when seen through your scholarly eyes, turns out to be a dramatic work![39]

These are only a few examples of such type of errors found in your writings. If one is to probe into your writings, numerous such mistakes can be detected. When one rushes in for research without equipping oneself with the requisite tools, it would not be surprising if such errors are detected in countless numbers.

At a time when the slogan is "Publish or Perish", research also has become an occupation or fad. So people like you are forced to jump in this field.

Nevertheless, I cannot help admiring you in one respect. Considering that this is the country where a well-known historian has gone to the absurd length of showing a person as having died twice, or describing a person as a son at one time and a grandson at another time of the same person, and yet he received the highest award meant for a scholar devoted to life-long and in-depth study,and where an ex-minister who is "a scholar of

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39. Ibid, p. 65:

Classical Newari Drama

10.1 The Tradition

The mid-seventh century Chinese references in the Tang Annals indicate that the Newars were "very fond of scenic plays". This is also confirmed by the Nepalese sources. For example, a reference in Gopāla Vaṃsāvalī (folio 21 b : - line 3) mentions the performance of a four-act Rāmāyana nṛtya sometime between Śiva Deva and Narendra Deva in the mid-seventhcentury. The later chronicles almost invariably attribute great antiquity to the dance-drama of Harisiddhi. Since its central figure is Ugra Tārā Nīlasaraśwatī, in its present form its revival could not be earlier than the 17th century. In the medieval times, cultivation of literary interests is evident from the nature of the manuscripts copied in the Nepal Valley. Manuscripts such as Daṇḍin's Kāvyādarśa (copied in NS 231/AD 1111), Harṣa's Nagānanda Nāṭaka (copied in NS 344/AD 1224, for Kumar Ananta Malla), clearly show that the court and the elites took interest in drama...

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distinction" and "a politician of standing",[40] as eulogized by his own publisher, constantly practises plagiarism to copy and present with some alterations of findings published by others in a native language after years of research. Whatever you, born and brought up in such an environment, did cannot really be called as of little importance, if we take into account the fact that you are a professor who teaches a quite different subject and spares off-duty hours for Oriental studies.

For the advancement of learning, whatever I have written is truth, nothing but truth, though it may appear bitter-coated. Hope, you will not take it to heart.

So much for today. I hope our contact will remain alive.

With best regards.

Kathmandu
April 2, 1984
Saṃvatsara-pratipadā

Sincerely yours,

Mahes Raj Pant

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40. D.R. Regmi, Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal, 3 vols (New Delhi : Abhinav Publications, 1983), blurb on the dust jacket.

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